



Chronic Wasting Disease Investigation Update

Provided by the Animal Industry Division
Michigan Department of Agriculture
November 21, 2008

Background:

The Michigan departments of Agriculture (MDA) and Natural Resources (DNR) confirmed the state's first case of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in a three-year old white-tailed deer from a privately owned cervid (POC) facility in Kent County on Monday, August 25, 2008.

The state quarantined all POC facilities, prohibiting the movement of all – dead or alive – privately-owned deer, elk, or moose. Officials do not yet know how the deer may have contracted the disease. To date, there is no evidence that CWD presents a risk to humans or to animals other than cervids.

MDA Actions:

MDA quarantined 580 POC facilities prohibiting the movement of living or dead privately-owned deer, elk, or moose.

Under the direction of the department's Emergency Manager and at the State Veterinarian's request for help, 25 field auditors and staff from other divisions within MDA stepped up for in-house and field training to audit POC facilities. This type of surge is intended only for use in unusual circumstances, as staff must set aside work they are doing in their own divisions to accomplish the effort. In the past two weeks, MDA staff associated with this surge have been able to visit POC facilities and either discuss with the operators what it will take to come into compliance with PA 190, the Privately Owned Cervids Act, or have been able to recommend releasing them from quarantine. A total of 39 POC facilities have been released from quarantine since the surge. The total number of POC facilities released from quarantine is 156.

There have been 35 POC facilities that have decided to de-commission since the disease investigation began and statewide quarantine went into place.

To date, 2,300 privately owned cervids have been tested for CWD; and all but the one in Kent County have been negative.

CWD Program Funding

MDA had a \$137,000 cooperative agreement with USDA in fiscal year (FY) 2008. More than half of the money was applied to payroll. Approx. \$4,000 went to laboratory testing and the rest went to travel, and cervid head pick-up. The cooperative agreement has expired, and MDA does not expect federal funding in FY '09.

Disease Surveillance:

The Kent County POC facility with the positive deer was depopulated on August 26, 2008. No additional disease was found, and the owner has applied for indemnity. An additional facility, which sold to the index herd, was voluntarily depopulated and released from quarantine. There were no positive animals on the second depopulated facility.

An additional Kent County facility has been released from quarantine as the deer from this facility were tested and found to be negative. One shooting and two breeding facilities associated with the disease investigation in Kent, Montcalm, and Osceola counties are under five-year-herd plans which require sample submissions for disease testing.

Officials do not yet know how the deer may have contracted the disease. DNR and MDA staff have reviewed records from the Kent County facility to trace deer that have been purchased, sold or moved by the owners in the last five years for deer and the last seven years for elk. As of November 2008, no other positive facilities have been found.

DNR Actions:

DNR has tested 3,000 free-ranging deer since January 2008.

The ban on all baiting and feeding of deer and elk in the Lower Peninsula is permanent.

A mandatory deer check for hunters who take a deer in the CWD Surveillance Zone (Algoma, Alpine, Cannon, Courtland, Nelson, Plainfield, Solon, Sparta, and Tyrone townships).

To prevent unintentional spread of CWD, the only parts of deer harvested in the surveillance zone allowed to be transported out are de-boned meat, capes, and antlers cleaned of all soft tissues. In addition, all transport of live wild deer, elk and moose has been prohibited statewide, including transport for rehabilitation purposes. Currently, there is no live animal test for CWD, and infected animals often show no signs of illness for years in spite of being infectious for other animals.

Disease Control Permits are available immediately upon request for landowners in the Kent County CWD surveillance zone who would like to cull deer from their property and assist with the collection of deer for testing.

Education and Outreach:

Town Hall meetings and updates:

- House of Representatives, September 9, 2008
- West Walker Town Hall, September 9, 2008
- Michigan Senate, September 10, 2008
- Natural Resources Commission, September 11, 2008
- MI Agriculture Commission, September 16, 2008
- Michigan Carrot Growers meeting, September 19, 2008
- Cervid Industry Update, September 25, 2008
- MSU Extension hosted a CWD update for the public on September 30, 2008; information was presented by MDA and DNR staff at Ionia High School.
- Senator Basham hosted a meeting at Gander Mountain in Taylor on Wednesday on October 8, 2008.
- MSU E hosted CWD Town Hall meetings in:
 - Kalamazoo on October 22
 - Marquette on October 23

- Frankenmuth on October 27
 - Grayling on October 29
- A CWD update was presented to the Michigan legislature on November 13, 2008.

MDA staff will present a CWD update at the Michigan Association of Conservation District's annual convention in Mt. Pleasant on December 11, 2008.